

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 500

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1788

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 27TH REFERENDUM: MARCOS CAMPAIGNS TO GET OUT
THE VOTE

REFS: A) MANILA 1498 B) MANILA 1499

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SINCE SUPREME COURT DECISION UPHOLDING
REFERENDUM, PRESIDENT MARCOS AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE ENGAGED
IN ENERGETIC CAMPAIGN TO GET OUT VOTE ON FEB 27. ITS INTEN-
SITY SUGGESTS MARCOS IS APPREHENSIVE PROPONENTS OF REFERENDUM
BOYCOTT COULD BE MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL. CAMPAIGN UNLIKELY TO
CONVINCE MARCOS CRITICS THAT UPCOMING REFERENDUM WILL BE TRULY
FREE VOTE. END SUMMARY

2. SINCE SUPREME COURT DECISION (JAN 31) UPHOLDING REF-
ERENDUM (REF A), PRESIDENT MARCOS AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE
ENGAGED IN VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO GET OUT VOTE FEBRUARY 27TH.
IN SPEECH MRS. MARCOS READ FOR HIM IN CAGAYAN PROVINCE
FEBRUARY 8, MARCOS APPEALED TO PEOPLE TO "GO OUT AND ASK
YOUR FRIENDS AND KIN TO PARTICIPATE, AND GIVE US YOUR TRUST
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ONCE MORE." ON FEBRUARY 7 PRESIDENT MET WITH 70 MEMBERS OF

DEFUNCT CONGRESS WHO REPORTEDLY "UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED" HIS POLICIES AND PROMISED TO HELP GET OUT THE VOTE. ON FEBRUARY 6, IN SPEECH TO CUSTOMS OFFICIALS MARCOS STRESSED CRISES FACING NATION AND NEED FOR HIM TO BE SURE OF SUPPORT AND TRUST OF CITIZENRY AS EXPRESSED IN REFERENDUM.

3. WIDE VARIETY OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, PROFESSIONAL GROUPS ETC. HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY PRESS AS ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING TO ENCOURAGE REFERENDUM PARTICIPATION. ALMOST DAILY EDITORIALS URGE VOTERS TO GO TO POLLS ON 27TH. SOME MARCOS STALWARTS HAVE CHARGED "TO ADVOCATE BOYCOTT IS THE SAME AS ADVOCATING REBELLION" (REGIME APOLOGIST TEODORO VALENCIA) BUT THIS HARSH TONE MUTE LATELY. MARCOS ORDERED TWO ADDITIONAL DAYS FOR REGISTRATION AND COMELEC ANNOUNCED THROUGH PRESS FEB 10 THAT PENALTIES FOR NON-REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION MAY BE SUSPENDED.

4. DLGCD UNDERSECRETARY SOCRATES TOLD POLCOUNS FEB 7 MARCOS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED AT MOVEMENT TO BOYCOTT REFERENDUM BEGUN BY ACTIVIST PRIESTS AND IS DOING ALL HE CAN TO COUNTERACT THIS EFFORT. SOCRATES MAINTAINED MARCOS WANTS CLEAN REFERENDUM AND HAS ORDERED MORE ZEALOUS SUPPORTERS NOT TO RIG RESULTS. ARCHBISHOP SIN, PROBABLY UNDER PRESIDENTIAL PRESSURE AND NOT DESIRING CONFRONTATION THIS ISSUE, TOLD AMBASSADOR HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN REFERENDUM AND EXPRESSED IRRITATION AT ACTIVIST FOREIGN PRIESTS URGING BOYCOTT. DESPITE SIN'S IRRITATION AT FOREIGN PRIESTS, FILIPINO BISHOP CLAVER OF BUKIDNON APPEARED AT COSMOPOLITAN CHURCH (PROTESTANT) FEBRUARY 5 AND INFORMED THOSE PRESENT THAT 8,000 OF HIS FAITHFUL HAD SIGNED BOYCOTT MANIFESTO. COSMOPOLITAN'S FILIPINO PASTOR DISTRIBUTED DECLARATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR SIGNATURE. IT TERMED REFERENDUM "MOCKERY" WHICH "FORCES US TO COLLABORATE IN FORGING OF OUR OWN CHAINS." THIS SAME THEME ENUNCIATED BY OPPOSITION LEADER SALONGA FOLLOWING DAY (A-46) ALTHOUGH HE STOPPED SHORT OF URGING BOYCOTT SAYING THIS WAS MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE. DESPITE PURPORTED REFERENDUM FREE DISCUSSION PROVISIONS, NEITHER COSMOPOLITAN CHURCH INCIDENT NOR SALONGA SPEECH REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS.

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5. COMMENT: APPARENTLY MARCOS IS TAKEN ABACK BY POSSIBILITY BOYCOTT MIGHT PROVE MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL AND MAKE HIM LOOK EXTREMELY FOOLISH. THUS THE CURRENT "SOUND AND FURY" CAMPAIGN. IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, TO CHANGE MANY MINDS OR CONVINCE HIS CRITICS HERE OR ABROAD THAT FEBRUARY 27TH REFERENDUM WILL BE GENUINELY FREE VOTE.
SULLIVAN

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